to predict the unknown.” The complexity is increased by the essential difference between IT people and software people, Peter suggests. “The IT guys want security, want to avoid endangering the system. Software people are more visionary – strive for newer, better features. So just adding a bit of spice to the pot of ingredients we already have to deal with, this ‘conflict’ also has to be resolved. Myself, I come down on the visionary side.”

Innovate to market
Peter underlines the need for innovation to take place on a large scale. “Innovation is meaningless unless it gets to market. And that’s where public funding has a role to play. In the EU’s Framework 7 tsunami recognition system project geared towards predicting a potential tsunami, I realised how fruitful the collaboration between different European partners can be. It whetted my appetite. In Austria we have the FFG, the Austrian Research Promotion Agency that provides a palette of instruments for collaborative research but you really have to make your case for software innovation since it is often regarded as a bit of an ‘invisible’ miracle potion in the mix. When the ITEA 3 COMPACT project came along, this seemed like the ideal higher-level project to become involved in. ITEA is certainly an environment to be in if you want to be innovative in the software domain. And we have learned a lot from being together with different partners, from software to hardware and from researchers to suppliers. Being able to see through the eyes of others as well as building good relationships and friendships. And getting a success story to market can act as a springboard for actual exploitation with a real product with real impact. We look forward to that!”

Predict the unknown
“Some people say that software innovation is an endless cycle of inventing and reinventing wheels. Take AI in the 70s – it was a hot topic then and is a hot topic now, but in reality the difference is that 50 years ago it was a fantasy or a possibility but now it’s a reality. And while things may appear simpler, in fact the complexity is increasing. And that’s where innovation is needed because you cannot deal with the problems of today using the methodologies of yesterday. So, it’s not so much a matter of reinventing wheels but inventing wheels much faster. Nowadays we have a lot more power than we had before – in terms of memory, speed, performance, image interpretation. There’s almost no limit to what we can imagine. It’s a matter of complexity. Everything is connected. We have to consider issues in a much more complex whole. We have